



**2009 - 2010
TRANSPORTATION
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
APPLICATION & GUIDANCE**

*June 2009
Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance*

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WELCOME!

The State of New Hampshire has been administering the Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program since 1994 – making this the 15th year. In that time, there have been approximately 261 projects that have been planned and constructed using these Federal funds.

We're pleased that your municipality or organization has chosen the TE program as the potential funding source to complete your eligible project. This document has been developed in order to help point you in the right direction as you develop an application for funding consideration. If you have had the benefit of TE funding for a project in the past, you will note that several changes have been made to the program starting this year. These changes are aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the program to deliver quality projects on budget and in a timely manner

IS MY PROJECT ELIGIBLE FOR TE FUNDS?

In order to determine if your proposed project is appropriate to fund with TE program dollars, there are two questions you'll need to ask:

- 1.) Does the project qualify as at least one (1) of the twelve (12) designated TE activities?

The twelve activities are:

	Activity	Examples
1.	Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.	New or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, or curb ramps; wide paved shoulders for nonmotorized use, bike lane striping, bike parking, and bus racks; construction or major rehabilitation of off-road shared use paths (nonmotorized transportation trails); trailside and trailhead facilities for shared use paths; bridges and underpasses for pedestrians and bicyclists and for trails.
2.	Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.	Educational activities to encourage safe walking and bicycling.
3.	Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites (including historic battlefields).	Acquisition of scenic land easements, vistas, and landscapes; acquisition of buildings in historic districts or historic properties, including historic battlefields.

4.	Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities).	For projects related to scenic or historic highway programs: Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; construction of visitor and welcome centers; designation signs and markers.
5.	Landscaping and other scenic beautification.	Landscaping, street furniture, lighting, public art, and gateways along highways, streets, historic highways, trails, and waterfronts.
6.	Historic preservation.	Preservation of buildings in historic districts; restoration and reuse of historic buildings for transportation-related purposes.
7.	Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals).	Restoration of historic railroad depots, bus stations, ferry terminals and piers, and lighthouses; rehabilitation of rail trestles, tunnels, and bridges; restoration of historic canals, canal towpaths, and historic canal bridges.
8.	Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use of the corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails).	Acquiring railroad rights-of-way; planning, designing, and constructing multiuse trails; developing rail-with-trail projects.
9.	Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising.	Billboard inventories and removal of illegal and nonconforming billboards. Inventory control may include, but not be limited to, data collection, acquisition and maintenance of digital aerial photography, video logging, scanning and imaging of data, developing and maintaining an inventory and control database, and hiring of outside legal counsel.
10.	Archaeological planning and research.	Research, preservation planning, and interpretation of archaeological artifacts; curation for artifacts related to surface transportation and artifacts recovered from locations within or along surface transportation corridors.

11.	Environmental mitigation: (i) to address water pollution due to highway runoff; or (ii) reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.	For existing highway runoff: soil erosion controls, detention and sediment basins, and river clean-ups. Wildlife underpasses or other measures to reduce vehicle caused wildlife mortality and/or to maintain wildlife habitat connectivity.
12.	Establishment of transportation museums.	Construction of new transportation museums; additions to existing museums for a transportation section; conversion of railroad stations or historic properties to museums with transportation themes.

Source: FHWA

2.) Does the project relate to surface transportation?

Surface transportation refers to all modes of surface transportation –including marine travel. As guidance, the following factors might be considered in judging a projects relation to a surface mode:

- The project's proximity to a highway or a pedestrian/bicycle corridor,
- Whether the project enhances the aesthetic, cultural, or historic aspects of the travel experience, and
- Whether it serves a current or past transportation purpose.

Please note that these factors are only a guide, and may vary according to each of the 12 eligible TE activities are reference for your particular project.

GETTING STARTED WITH THE APPLICATION

First things first: in order to be eligible to apply for funding through the TE program, you will first need to submit a letter of intent to the NHDOT & your regional RPC. The letter need not be overly long or detailed – rather it only needs to:

- List the municipality or organization that will be applying for funding;
- Identify the project contact person, mailing address, phone & email;
- Provide a brief description of the potential project you'll be applying for funding for;
- Provide information regarding which of the 12 eligible TE activities you believe applies to your project; and
- Estimate the amount of funding necessary to complete the project.

These letters are completely non-binding. By providing NHDOT & the RPCs with the information, it allows for proper program planning – everything from what topics would be germane to the required municipal project management workshop to better fiscal planning of the available funding. It also ensures that all potentially interested parties are placed in the communications loop with NHDOT & their RPC and are able to fully participate in the process.

These letters are required however, and failure to submit the required letter by the July 2, 2009 deadline will result in your project having to wait until the next funding cycle to apply. While this may seem overly harsh, a large and complicated program like this requires detailed planning to enjoy success, and administering projects that are federally funded carries many far more detailed requirements.

OK, THE LETTER WAS SENT, NOW WHAT?

Within a month of the reception deadline for letters of intent, notification will be sent out to the project contacts identified in those letters about the mandatory municipally managed project workshops. Each applicant must have someone that will be directly involved in the management of their project attend one of the scheduled MMPWs that will be held throughout the state. In an effort to facilitate ease of attendance, NHDOT staff will select locations in those areas most convenient to the largest number of applicants. In addition, the MMPW held prior to application submission will be an abbreviated version of the standard full day course – taking only about an hour and a half to complete.

Attendance at a workshop is required. Those projects that have no certification of representation at a MMPW will be deemed ineligible for TE program funds for the current year. There are many requirements involved in administering federal transportation dollars, and this is the easiest way to ensure that everyone has the correct information about these requirements

THE MMPW WAS GREAT – WHAT'S NEXT?

With the Letter of Intent and Municipally Managed Project Workshops tasks completed, its time to move on to the application itself. If you have participated in the TE application process before, you will note that there have been substantial changes to the program application for this year. One major change is the manner in which the application review will be conducted.

The Review Process

Beginning with the 2009 Application Cycle, the NHDOT will be conducting the review and statewide ranking of project applications for the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee (TEAC) consideration as part of their recommendations to the Commissioner of Transportation, who makes the decision regarding which projects will be awarded funding.

The NHDOT staff review will involve award of bonus points for projects that demonstrate proper project planning, community support and strong regional support. While all eligible applications will be accepted and reviewed, those projects earning the greatest number of bonus points will be the most competitive and will rank highest overall – increasing the likelihood of obtaining funds. The amount of bonus points available and an explanation of the information requested under each criterion is detailed on pages 5-10.

Another change to the 2009 application process will be the application submission process. In the past, applications were submitted to the RPCs for their review and comment before being sent from the RPCs to NHDOT. Beginning this year, applications will be submitted to both the RPCs and NHDOT at the same time. This will allow NHDOT staff additional review time of applications, particularly by the Environmental Bureau at NHDOT to identify any potential resource impacts that may have been missed by the applicant. The goal of this revised process is to ensure submission of more realistic project estimates. It will also allow the RPCs additional time to review and rank projects prior to submitting them to NHDOT – thereby strengthening the role of the regions (and consequently the communities within each region) in the process.

A summary of the application form and an explanation of the information each question is soliciting may be found below.

1.) Contact Information

Applicant: This is the name of the entity applying for the funds – the name of the community or organization hoping to be the recipient of the monies applied for – and the entity responsible for providing matching funds.

Contact: The person who will be involved in the management of the project and who will be able to answer any questions that might come up regarding the project.

Sponsoring Regional Planning Commission: The sponsoring RPC will be the RPC that serves your community or the area where the project is to be located is considered your sponsoring RPC.

Attachments: The respective RPCs will forward their regional ranking for the proposed project and identify any additional project related comments from the RPC. Projects will receive a bonus score relative to the regional priority ranking they have been given. The rankings will result in the following bonus scores:

Rank	Points
1	45
2	15
3	5

In acknowledging the limited funds available, the points are awarded to ensure that those projects ranked #1 by their respective region will receive the highest share of bonus points, making them the strongest applications in the competitive selection process – ensuring that priority projects get priority preference for funding.

****For Statewide Projects:** For those projects that claim ‘statewide’ impact – defined as involving communities in different RPCs – applicants will need to submit their applications to all of the RPCs involved. The evaluation of statewide projects will involve a review of the respective projects ranking by each of the regions involved.

2. Project Planning

Beginning in the 2009 application cycle, the TE program will be emphasizing strong project planning. This will not reduce the number of projects funded, but it will allow for proper project planning to occur to ensure more rapid movement of projects through design, resource review and construction phases. The changes are also intended to result in more accurate financial projections that should ultimately lead to improved financial planning for the program that will result in an overall increase in the number of projects constructed.

Those projects receiving the largest amount of bonus points in this category will be more successful in the overall process. The intent of this question is to gauge whether proper planning questions have been considered in the development of the project that funding is requested for.

The first part of this section asked applicants to please identify whether the proposed project has undergone any previous planning efforts, either as part of a larger study, or as an individual study.

If the project has been studied previously, please identify the title of that study and the year the study was conducted and don’t forget to attach a copy of the plan, or pertinent section of the plan as well.

Beginning with this application cycle, NHDOT will be looking for evidence that proper planning considerations have been made by applicants concerning their projects. The aim is not to require hiring of engineering firms to complete engineering studies for project proposals – as that typically takes place in a more formal manner as part of the design process after the project has been awarded funding. Rather, NHDOT is looking to ensure that appropriate questions have been considered in the development of the project concept being submitted for funding consideration. The new process also seeks evidence from applicants that public input has been solicited, that public support is obtained and that support of the public for the proposed project is documented.

Attached to your application on as many separate sheets as necessary, please identify whether the project sponsor has considered and developed responses to the following planning considerations:

- **Identified the project's purpose and need:**
What is the issue in need of resolution? What benefit does addressing that need provide?
- **Provided an overview of existing conditions:**
This information will explain the current situation around the project location, including how much of what types of traffic, intersection level of service analysis, any accident data, identification of any natural or cultural resources that might be impacted, etc. to familiarize reviewers with the proposed project area and to aid in making the case for there being an issue in the proposed project area that requires a resolution eligible for TE funds to assist with.
- **Demonstrated consideration of proposed project alternatives:**
Is the proposed option the only one that has been considered? Have there been others? Is there a particular reason why this option seems to be the best option available to resolve the purpose and need?

Applicants should provide details concerning the answers to these questions as well as an investigation of what would the result be if nothing is changed in the project area.

Applicants should use this opportunity to explain how the proposed project best meets the identified purpose and need for the proposed project. This information will be needed during the environmental review portion of the design process, in the event that your project is awarded funding.

- **Provided a conceptual design:**
In general detail, what would the preferred alternative look like and where will it be located? Please provide concept/sketch plans of the proposed

project to be funded through this process. If no construction will result from this process, please provide a narrative detailing the benefits of project implementation.

- **Provided an estimated budget:**

What do you think your proposed project will cost to complete as planned?

Please break the project budget out into 3 categories:

- 1.) *Preliminary Engineering:* This involves everything from the engineering study to formalize the project details, to project design, permitting and environmental review.
- 2.) *Right-of-Way:* Will any property rights need to be procured in order to accomplish the proposed project? All of the costs associated with purchase of land, easements, surveying, document development and legal representation would be identified in this category.
- 3.) *Construction:* This category covers all of the expenses associated with construction the planned and designed project. This line item would include the costs of construction engineering and inspection services.

Please note: Construction costs should include close to full-time construction inspection cost estimates for all TE projects. This is a departure from the past practices of municipalities to fund only part-time inspection, and is reflective of new guidance issued by FHWA.

- **Documented public input:**

Public input and support for projects is vital to successful project implementation. Those projects that are successful in obtaining funds and then implementing their projects owe that success to the sustained support provided by the public. As a result, NHDOT is looking for evidence that the planning process for your project includes opportunities for public involvement and input. If this has been done for your project, please be sure that the summary of the public input provided is attached, and an overview of the public process is as well.

Each of these items will completed will result in 2.5 bonus points each, for a possible total bonus score of 15 points. Projects receiving the full allotment of points under this item will be the most competitive.

3. Plan Support

A yes answer to this question means that:

- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives established in the Municipal Master Plan(s) for the proposed project area;
- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives in any natural or cultural resource plans;
- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives of the Regional Land Use Plan; and
- The project is in conformance with the planning strategies identified in any local, regional or statewide Corridor or Modal Plans.

Please note that a 'yes' response to this question is a 'yes' answer to all of the above statements. A 'no' response to any of the above results in a 'no' response to question #3. In the event that any of the plans identified above do not exist, then the project is assumed to be in conformance.

Additional points (up to 12) may be awarded by NHDOT upon review in instances where projects are directly mentioned/identified in planning documents at the state, regional or municipal level.

4. Intermodal Focus

In order to ensure maximum strategic value of the TE dollars invested, those projects that offer enhancements to the greatest number of Surface Transportation modes will receive the highest number of points under this category. On a separate sheet, please be as creative and detailed as possible in taking credit for bonus points available. The surface transportation modes are pedestrian, bicycle, transit, rail, marine & automobile. Those applications lacking credible details for points requested will not be credited with those points. Should you have questions regarding this question, please contact your RPC or:

Tom Jameson, Project Manager
P: 271.2107
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William Rose, Senior Planner
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5. Project Description

On a separate sheet(s), provide a map of the project area that shows the proposed alignment.

6. Project Funding

This section will identify how much funding you will be requesting from the TE program. While municipal management of projects under the TE program is not required, it is looked upon favorably and is therefore eligible for bonus points in the application process.

Please identify the estimated budget for the three categories identified in question 6. In the section following the program budget, please identify the reimbursable portion of the project funding and the local match to be provided.

The section that follows is to be completed and signed by the RPC. This information acknowledges that a planning professional has reviewed the costs and proposed budget and agrees that they are appropriate and accurate. Please be sure to attach official correspondence from the entity that will be responsible for providing the anticipated match that obligates them to provide the matching funds indicated in the application, in the event that the funding application is successful.

The next questions deal with the matching funds source and its appropriateness and what entity will be responsible for maintaining the project once completed.

7. Previously Awarded TE Projects

This section is aimed at determining the applicant's previous 'record of accomplishment' in regards to TE program funding. Please attached separate sheets that indicate that funding has been previously sought by your organization or municipality, a description of the project, the amount awarded (if any) and the completion status of the project.

Please note that all current (active) TE projects awarded in 2004 and before will receive additional scrutiny by NHDOT during the application review. If the project has not been completed due to inaction by the managing entity, new applications for funding may be denied as a result. This will not affect those projects dating to 2004 and before that have not been completed due to issues beyond the control of the municipality/sponsor.

I've finished the Application and submitted it, now what?

After completing this application, you will need to submit it to your RPC & NHDOT by **September 15, 2009, by 3pm** for the next part of the process. Please note that applications submitted after 3pm on September 15 cannot be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will also be returned as ineligible for funding consideration.

For more information on the process or program, please refer to the TE/CMAQ Program Guidebook. You may also contact NHDOT staff indicated below:

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E: Tjameson@dot.state.nh.us

William Rose, Senior Planner

P: 271.6581

E: Wrose@dot.state.nh.us

Send completed application to the attention of the staff listed above at the following address:

NHDOT – Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance
John O. Morton Building
7 Hazen Drive, PO Box 483
Concord, NH 03302-0483

You can also contact your local RPC staff at the numbers listed below:

North Country Council	444.6303	Strafford RPC	742.2523
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC	448.1680	Nashua RPC	424.2240
Lakes RPC	279.8171	Southern NH RPC	669.4664
Southwest RPC	357.0557	Rockingham PC	778.0885
Central NH RPC	226.6020		

Following submission of completed applications, NHDOT and RPC reviews will take place September through December, with RPC's providing project rankings & comments in December 2009. The TEAC will meet to discuss project s and recommend awards in the winter of 2010.